

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

P. O. Box 4411

Huntsville, Alabama 35802

J. C. Spilman, Editor

Volume 7, No. 3

July 1968

Serial No. 23



Pictured at the right is the Rahway Mint Historical Marker located at the South Bank of the Rahway River on the east side of what is now St. George's Avenue in Rahway, New Jersey. The original marker was erected in 1956 and later destroyed by an automobile accident; the present marker was erected about two years ago.

The site of the original mint of the New Jersey Coppers was established through the research of Mr. Damon G. Douglas and the data published in The Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society, (July 1951), Volume 69, pp. 223-230. Based on Mr. Douglas' evidence, the State of New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development erected the Rahway Mint Historical Marker at the site.

We are pleased to present in this issue a reprint of Mr. Douglas' research for our patrons. Our thanks to all those who cooperated with us in this effort, with special acknowledgement to -

- Isabel C. Brooks;
Assistant Supervisor, Historic Sites,
State of New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development.
- Frank P. Townsend;
Editor, New Jersey History, formerly
The Proceedings of the New Jersey
Historical Society.
- Damon G. Douglas;
Author, The Original Mint of the New
Jersey Coppers.



LETTERS and TECHNICAL NOTES

● ● from Eric P. Newman

CIRCULATION of ST. PATRICK FARTHING in AMERICA (TN-8)

With respect to St. Patrick farthings, it seems to me that Walter Breen's comment in his letter (CNL April, 1968, TN-7) should be clarified. He stated that St. Patrick farthings have been found "by the hundreds in non-collector accumulations consisting principally of worn out halfpence, Rosa Americana and Wood's Coinages." This was mentioned to prove American circulation of St. Patrick farthings. I had pointed out in an article in the May 1963 Numismatist that only St. Patrick halfpence and not farthings were included in the New Jersey authorization to Mark Newby in 1688.

I think readers would be interested in documentation of any such accumulation being found in America. I know of no newspaper or other written mention of circulation at any time of St. Patrick farthings in America. Accumulations found in England or Ireland would not be probative as all the coins were of English or Irish origin. Since all accumulations mentioned included quantities of worn eighteenth century copper coinage such as Woods, Rosa Americana and George I, II, and III pieces, this would not indicate seventeenth century circulation of any St. Patrick pieces which were included in it. While Breen is not asserting that St. Patrick farthings circulated in seventeenth century America, it would be helpful if anyone knows of any evidence of their eighteenth century circulation in America.

● ● from Edward R. Barnsley

FRANCIS HOPKINSON & SEVEN DEVICES WITH MOTTOES (TN-9)

The letter from C. D. Grace published in your March-June, 1966, issue, page 25, gives one the impression that Francis Hopkinson was the sole designer of "seven Devices with Mottoes" used on the 1778-1779 Continental Currency, as well as certain other "Borders, Ornaments, and Checks for the new Continental Currency now in the Press". This conception is based on the fact that Hopkinson submitted bills to Congress for eight categories of work for which he claimed credit, including those two just mentioned. However, Mr. Grace did not state that these bills were never paid, "Because it is within the knowledge of one of the Members of the Board, that with respect to the charges of the works incidental to the Treasury, the said Francis Hopkinson was not the only person consulted on these exhibitions of Fancy, and therefore cannot claim the sole merit of them, and is not entitled in this respect to the full sum charged." (Reference: Hastings, George E., "Life and Works of Francis Hopkinson", Chicago, 1926, p. 249).

It would appear from these official minutes that Hopkinson had more or less help from other people in this work, hence any unqualified statement that he was the only designer should be taken, like the old Latins did, "Cum Grano Salis" until proof positive is produced. It should only be said at the present time that he was the principal developer of the emblems in question.



RESEARCH FORUM



Tabulated below are several new inquiries submitted to the Research Forum by our patrons. Answers or information relative to these questions will be extremely helpful to those of us doing research in Colonial American Numismatics and related fields. Please address correspondence on these items to ye editor.



RF-19 FUGIO HOARDS

The Bank of New York "hoard" of Fugio Cents of 1787 was discussed in the July - September 1967 issue of The Colonial Newsletter. Is the existence known or reported of any similar "hoards" of Fugio Cents?

RF-20 U.S. 1797 LARGE CENT STRUCK OVER
MASSACHUSETTS HALF CENT

Raymond Catalogue, (page 49), says that the U. S. Mint large cent of 1797 is known struck over a Massachusetts half cent. "Penny Whimsy" describes 35 die combinations of this year yet makes no mention of such overstriking. Where did Raymond get this information? How many pieces are now known? Is the Massachusetts die attributable?



RF-21 WHO WAS H. N. RUST ?

The five extant dies of "New Haven" Fugios (The Colonial Newsletter, October 1964, RF-16, page 60) all appear to have been owned at one time by Mr. Horatio N. Rust, believed to be of New York City. Mr. Rust reported to the Editor of The American Journal of Numismatics (Volume III, page 72) his "discovery" of these dies in Bridgeport and New Haven, Connecticut. Fourteen years later, in the obituary of C. Wyllys Betts, the same journal reported that these dies were located by Betts and purchased by Rust.

This inquiry addresses itself to the positive identification of Mr. H. (Horatio?) N. Rust and to his relationship to the business and numismatic community. Any information relative to Mr. Rust will be helpful.



RF-22 THE "FIFTH PROPOSAL"

Of the five proposals for contract coinage for the United States reported by the Board of Treasury on April 9, 1787, two were submitted for the consideration of the Continental Congress, and three were discarded as being to "the embarrassment of the Public Finances." One of these discarded proposals appears in the Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 136, pp 483-486, but neither the name of the proposer or the date of submittal is recorded. This proposal is presented in full, below. Can anyone identify the proposer or author of this rather farsighted memorial?

- In establishing a Coin and making it pass through the whole Continent care should be taken to render everybody pleased therewith so as to be ready to accept of it in the fullest confidence; to which end the following considerations strike me as necessary to be observed.

1st That the free circulation of such Money is every one's Interest, and for making it appear to them in that light, the most eligible method in my opinion would be to erect a National Bank connected with the Mint, open for the reception of what they can put in so that all may have a share, for should it be confined to any set Number of Men, the Community at large may be induced to say - "Let them that have the Bank to themselves, keep the Money to themselves," which would destroy the uses for which the Coinage is intended.

2nd That to prevent the Exportation of Money the intrinsic value of it ought to be something less than what it passes for, and as every bodies Interest is connected with the Circulation of it, by having a share in the Bank, its reputation will not by that Circumstance be diminished.

3rd That the Coinage ought to be made as soon possible, before all the Gold and Silver are sent out of the Country and to such an Amount as to create an apparent plenty thereof in the circulation, for should any scarcity be supposed it will cause it to become an Article of Merchandise, and thereby prevent the Utility of the plan. The least Sum that I think should be issued is the value of half a Million of Pounds Sterling.

If the Congress thinks fit to adopt my proposal of immediately getting over the value of One hundred thousand Pounds Sterling in Copper Coin, the same in effect will be productive of double that sum, for by the different States issuing the same in Payment for the Services of the Government, the equivalent of the same in Gold & Silver will remain in their hands which being

sent to the Mint to be coined will together with the amount of said Copper Coin make up two fifths of the stipulated Sum the remaining three fifths I am persuaded will not be difficult to raise, for the Public finding the benefit of such a circulation, the monied People whose Treasure is perhaps now buried will be induced to bring forward their Gold & Silver to purchase Shares in the Bank.

Another suggestion I beg leave to make is, that the Persons employed in Coining, should be entirely excluded from any Interest or Profit accruing from it except the Terms or Wages on which they are employed, which will prevent an adulteration of the Metal, and many other inconveniences further. Circumspection is necessary in employing the most eligible People in the business or Coining, these are to be found only among those who have been regularly trained up & engaged in such business and from their acquaintance with it have been lucratively employed whereby having acquired a good reputation will not undertake a new Employment of the same Nature unless encouraged by a suitable offer equally to be depended upon. New Adventurers may offer themselves regardless of any other principle than that of self Interest, or at least without a due sense of their Ignorance of the business so that in the execution of it the design of the present plan may be thwarted, and if once wounded cannot easily be healed.

As self Interest & Ambition are Principles by which Mankind are actuated any Plan that can promote the former and feed the latter must be conducive to the Cementing of that Union which this Country is desirous of preserving between its several States; the present plan therefore is in my opinion of that Nature, the Interest of the Country in it being already pointed out, and the Ambition consisting in being on a footing with other Nations by having a Coin of its own. If the Congress view it in this light and are willing to engage with me, I will with all possible Speed make a Voyage to Sweden and get the aforementioned One hundred thousand Pounds Sterling in such Copper Money as shall be fixed on which together with the Dyes as also for those of the Gold & Silver I will bring over along with the other Implements necessary for use which in that Country can most probably be made at a less expence & in a better manner than in any other. I will further engage to bring over two able Coiners, but I cannot promise that they shall be the most Capital, for the lucrativeness of their employment is such as perhaps this Country at present could not afford to equalize.

On my bringing this aforementioned Sum of One hundred thousand Pounds I require no other Payment than the value thereof according to the Rate in which the Money is current here, in Goods at a Market price, unexceptional Bills of Exchange, or in any other manner than can be mutually agreed upon so that there shall be no deficiency in the said Amount. I likewise require no other payment for the Implements aforementioned than what they actually

& bona fide cost me (which shall be shewn by proper attested Accounts) together with the incidental Expenses of Shipping, Insurance Freight &c that will attend the transporting them hither.

If this Plan when duly considered is approved of, I presume that the gain accruing to me cannot be thought too great it being only what the Mint when established here will derive itself in Coining; but whatever may be the determination of Congress, I request an explicit and definitive Answer within fourteen days as the Nature of my other engagements would render a longer detention injurious to me.



● ● Recent replies to earlier Research Forum questions - - -

RF-4 (CNL, August 1963, p.7)

What edge is on the silver "Kentucky" token ?

- ➤ Richard Picker reports a silver Kentucky (Middleton) token with a plain edge.

RF-5 (CNL, August 1963, p.7)

How many collectors have specimens of varieties 1-A, 2-B, 3-C and 6-F of the tin farthings of 1688 reading 1/24 Part Real ?

- ➤ Eric P. Newman advises us that his collection has specimens of all varieties shown on the plate included in A.N.S. Museum Notes XI, (James II 1/24th Real for the American Plantations), and that if someone is doing further research on this project he will be glad to give them further data.

RF-10 (CNL, December 1963, p. 14)

Coin World of March 29, 1963 on page 43 notes in an article by Russell Rulau, that Woodward stated that Mott tokens dated 1789 were restruck on both thick and thin planchets. Is this report correct; if so, how are they told apart ?

- ➤ Robert A. Vlack reports that the differences in the thick and thin planchets of Mott tokens is quite apparent. The thick one would be equivalent to the weight of a halfpenny English token, and the thin one to a farthing English token. - "I have always suspected this to be the case as only the thick one has the plain edge whereas the thin one is almost always milled with a coarse grain. I have a thick one about three times the thickness of a thin, so the difference is very obvious. "

A COLONIAL NEWSLETTER REPRINT ●

● from The Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society

**THE ORIGINAL MINT OF THE
NEW JERSEY COPPERS**

By DAMON G. DOUGLAS

A significant but almost forgotten episode in New Jersey's "experiment in independence" was the exercise of sovereignty through the establishment of a state coinage in 1786. It consisted of some 3,000,000 "Horse Head" coppers upon which appeared for the first time on any authorized coinage the legend *E PLURIBUS UNUM*.¹

That the site of the mint in which such an historic coin was first made should have been entirely forgotten and that two other locations at which the coinage was subsequently carried on are presently the only recognized mint sites is a prank of fate that can now be corrected.

These two later locations, the John Cleves Symmes home in Morristown,² and the Matthias Ogden home in Elizabethtown,³ were recorded some sixty years after the events in reminiscences by an octogenarian and a septuagenarian who each recalled having seen in early childhood one of these mints in operation. But no such eyewitness account of the original mint has come to light and thus its very existence as well as its identification have perforce been established from a mosaic of existing documentary fragments. However, the picture they piece together is a clear one and establishes the south bank of the Rahway River on the east side of what is now St. George's Ave., Rahway, as the historic site. The evidence is presented now for the first time.

A grist mill and a saw mill then occupied the site. Sold to Christopher Marsh by Abraham Clark three months before he signed the Declaration of Independence, they became the property of Daniel Marsh in October, 1777.⁴ They appear in the list of ratables assessed against him in 1779 to 1783,⁵ the only years for which the records are extant, and were a part of his estate at his death in 1803.⁶ A careful search of the county deeds indicate them to be the only mills of which he was possessed.

¹Sylvester S. Crosby, *The Early Coins of America*, Boston, 1873, gives most of the previously published history of the issue. Referred to hereafter as *Crosby*.

²Lewis Condict in *Proceedings of N.J. Hist. Soc.*, 1856, p.10, and *Crosby*, p.282.

³*Crosby*, p.287, Ernest L. Meyer's Map of Elizabeth, 1775-1783, labels it "Robert Ogden", Matthias' father. A description is given in Essex Deeds, N-441, 15 June 1807, by Matthias Ogden's three sons to Joel R. Davis.

⁴Essex Deeds, D 2-290.

⁵N.J. State Library, Ratables, Box 37.

⁶Essex Deeds, H-645.

This Daniel Marsh had served as an Essex County Justice of the Peace and as one of the judges of the County Court of Common Pleas. In 1785 he was elected one of Essex County's three representatives in the General Assembly and in January of 1786, with five associates, had inaugurated a new line of stages between New York and Philadelphia.⁷

The Continental Congress was giving attention to the state of the copper currency and in January of 1786 had referred to the Board of Treasury a letter regarding a federal mint from Matthias Ogden,⁸ Essex County's member of the New Jersey Legislative Council. Ogden, a young hero of the Revolution, held the contract for transporting the mails between New York and Philadelphia over the old line of stages in which he owned an interest.⁹ In March of 1786 he had introduced a bill to establish a copper coinage in New Jersey which had unanimously passed the Council only to be rejected in the Assembly with Daniel Marsh's vote cast against it.

By the time the next sitting of the legislature convened, Ogden had disposed of his interest in the stages and had the permission of Congress to shift the mail transport to Marsh's new line.¹⁰ This or some other considerations must have changed Marsh's attitude toward a State coinage of coppers. As one of a committee of four, appointed by the Assembly, to confer with a trio of Englishmen petitioning for a contract for such a coinage, he introduced a bill in behalf of the petitioners entitled "An Act for the Establishment of a Coinage of Copper in this State."¹¹

This bill was enacted into law on June 1, 1786 with Marsh and Ogden both recorded as voting "Aye." It granted to the three contractors, Walter Mould, Thomas Goadsby and Albion Cox, the privilege of coining 3,000,000 coppers, each to contain 150 grains of pure copper and to bear such marks and inscriptions as should be directed by the Justices of the Supreme Court. They were to be valued at 15 to the Jersey shilling and the total amount was to be completed within two years. For the privilege the contractors were required to pay in to the State Treasury one tenth of the coins struck each quarter and to give at least two sufficient sureties for their faithful performance of the contract."

With the contract secured the contractors by what may seem to be more than mere coincidence, proceeded to lease as their mint the mills of Daniel Marsh, and Matthias Ogden, bound himself to Marsh as surety for Mould and Cox. The lease itself has not been found but that it was recorded on page 217 of Liber A, Essex County Deeds, is attested by the Grantor and Grantee indices which survived a 19th century fire which

⁷Advertisement in *New York Gazetteer*, Jan. 24, 1786.

⁸*Journals of the Continental Congress*, XXX, p.22n.

⁹Papers of the Continental Congress, No. 61, pp.291-2.

¹⁰*Journals of the Continental Congress*, XXX, p.197.

¹¹*Crosby*, p. 278.

destroyed the deed book itself. Its date, June 22, 1786, is given by Matthias Ogden in an affidavit and petition for a writ of *ne exeat statum* which he secured July 19, 1788 in an unsuccessful effort to prevent Walter Mould escaping from the state after having defaulted on the rents and, since Cox was then insolvent, leaving Ogden bound for them.¹²

A rule of reference by the Chancellor, Governor William Livingston, filed June 7, 1788, in a complaint of Cox against Goadsby required that Cox, if successful in proving his complaint, should "exonerate the Security now liable to pay the Rents of the Mills agreeably to the Contract with Daniel Marsh." It further stipulated that "all the implements, tools and other property, taken from the said Works by a Writ of Replevin, be returned and put in the same state as much as possible they were in when taken away."¹³

The Writ referred to was issued January 29, 1788 at the request of Cox.¹⁴ It directed the sheriff of Essex County "to replevin and deliver" to Cox "Two Iron Cutting Presses, one pair of Rollers, Twelve Ingots for Casting Copper, Six hundred Wait of Blanks for making Copper pence and Sixty Ingots of Copper and one Coining Press which Thomas Goadsby hath taken and unjustly detains against the said Cox and his Pledges." Part of these items were signed for by Matthias Ogden on February 9, 1788 as "Received at Rahway Mills" and "taken from Mr. Thomas Goadsby on 30 January 1788 at said Mills, by virtue of a writ of replevin against him."¹⁵

The amount of the rents and the term of the lease are given in letters written by Jonathan Dayton, Matthias Ogden's brother-in-law, to John Cleves Symmes in 1789 after the death of Walter Mould in Ohio. "As the surety of Messrs. Mould and Cox he (Ogden) has been obligated to pay for them . . . one year's rent of the mill which is £130." and later "Genl. Ogden having made a liberal & advantageous offer for giving up the mills which Mould and Cox had taken for seven years at £130 per ann., for the payment of which he had unhappily bound himself as surety . . ."¹⁶

The exact date when coining started at the Mills has not been determined but we shall establish that it was well ahead of the other locations. It appears to have been subsequent to November 17, 1786 when Goadsby and Cox petitioned the legislature for a revision of the contract that would sever their

¹²N.J. Court of Chancery records, Ogden vs Mould.

¹³Ibid, Cox vs. Goadsby.

¹⁴N.J. Hist. Soc. Mss. A 78.246.

¹⁵N.J. Hist. Soc. Mss. Caleb Camp Papers.

¹⁶Beverly W. Bond, Jr., *The Correspondence of John Cleves Symmes*, p. 231 and p. 238.

rights from Mould.¹⁷ They alleged that although they had completed their establishment of "rolling mill, furnaces, cutting and coining presses, unwrought copper and copper ore" all without any assistance from Mould, he still prevented their start at coining by his refusal to join with them in the legally required bond surety which they had already posted with the treasurer. When on November 22, 1786 the legislature enacted the requested severance, there was no further bar to an immediate start.

That the coining did commence promptly thereafter would be inferable from the fact that three months later on March 16, 1787 the Treasurer acknowledged receipt of the first quarterly payment of the state's royalty. His account book shows this to have been paid to him in the form of a parcel of the coppers sent to him by Goadsby and Cox by the stage coach.¹⁸

However, Walter Mould was to require considerably more time to make the necessary arrangements for starting the coining of his one-third of the originally authorized amount. His removal to Morris County is established as having taken place late in March of 1787. Testimony to this effect was given by his attorney, Caleb Russel, before Essex County Justices on April 14, 1787, challenging the venue of the court since his client had been a resident of Morris county for just over a fortnight past.¹⁹

The first payment of royalties from the Mould mint were received by the Treasurer in coppers and was receipted for on May 8, 1787.²⁰ Mould's bond and sureties for the faithful performance of his contract had been sent to the Treasurer on January 18, 1787 by Attorney Russel, just within the two months permitted by the legislature.²¹ The coining, however, could scarcely have commenced before Mould's removal from Essex County, or about the first of April, 1787, long after the presses at Rahway had started their copper flood.

The third mint, "a room behind the kitchen" of Matthias Ogden's home in Elizabethtown, was not in operation until considerably later. The authority for it is the recollections of Mrs. William (Mary Barber) Chetwood, recounted to her son Francis B. Chetwood in 1858 and recorded by him at that time.²² She recalled as a child of ten or twelve having seen the coining press in operation but did not recall having seen any rolling, annealing or cutting of planchets. Born November 1, 1780, she would have been ten years old in 1790 and only

¹⁷N.J. State Library Mss., "Social and Economic."

¹⁸Princeton University Library Mss., The Account Books of James Mott, Treasurer of New Jersey.

¹⁹Essex County Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, Mss. writ discharging Thomas Abney from indenture.

²⁰See note 18 above.

²¹Letter of transmittal now in collection of J. N. Spiro.

²²Crosby, p. 287.

six in 1786.²³ Now there took place in 1789 or early 1790 a very considerable operation of overstriking with the Jersey copper dies a great quantity of diverse copper coins, the circulation of which had been stopped by the coppers "panic" of mid 1789.²⁴ For the recoinage of these the only operation needed was that of the coining press. A few of the old coining dies, originally used at the Rahway mint, together with a number of new dies were used for this later overstriking operation.

The rule of reference of June 7, 1788, to which we have previously referred, besides requiring the return of all tools and implements to the Mills, placed them all in the absolute custody of Matthias Ogden as Trustee pending the report of the referees. In the fall of 1789 Ogden had arranged with Marsh for giving up the Mills and, with the referees' report still not forthcoming,²⁵ it may be presumed that the coining tools and implements were removed at that time to the Ogden home in Elizabethtown. This presumption is confirmed, at least with regard to the coining press, by the sale in 1794 by Ogden's widow of "one coining press" to the first mint of the United States.²⁶

Thus we can be sure that neither this Elizabethtown operation nor Mould's Morristown coining can dispute the position of the Rahway mint as the first in which were coined the Jersey coppers.

Although this experiment in state coinage ultimately resulted in failure, the Jersey "Horse Heads" were the sturdiest of their contemporary rivals and outlasted them all in public acceptance. The effect of their *E PLURIBUS UNUM* motto as propaganda for a Federal government may have been considerable. The copying of this motto on the coins of the United States when Albion Cox and John Harper of the original Rahway mint were both working at the Federal mint may have been more than merely coincidental.²⁷

The venture adds to our New Jersey Heritage a chapter of free enterprise in coining whose imprint still stands holdly on the coinage of our nation. Surely the site where the minting commenced should receive broader recognition. Jointly with the New Jersey Numismatic Society and the Historic Sites Markers section of the Department of Conservation and Development, our Historical Society might well undertake to see that it does.

²³Wheeler, *The Ogdens of Elizabethtown*.

²⁴*Minutes of the Common Council*, New York, 21 July 1789, Vol. I, pp. 471-2, *Gazette of the United States*, 22 July 1789, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 28 July 1789. The overstriking was reported June 7, 1790 by an Assembly Committee, *Proceedings of the 14th General Assembly of New Jersey*. It is attested by many of the overstruck coins still extant.

²⁵It was finally rendered June 3, 1790, Unindexed Mss., New Jersey Court of Chancery, Record Vault No. 6.

²⁶Frank H. Stewart, *History of the First Mint of the United States*, Camden, 1924, p. 175.

²⁷*Ibid.* p. 88 and p. 92.